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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1998
INFO RUCNMGH/MAGHREB COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS TUNIS 002527

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STATE FOR NEA/MAG (EHOPKINS AND MHARRIS) AND DRL
NSC/NESA
NEA/PPD (AFERNANDEZ AND DFOLEY)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM PREL KPAQ TS

SUBJECT: TUNISIAN HUMAN RIGHTS LEAGUE ISSUES
COMMUNIQUE

REF: TUNIS 2501

¶1. The Bizerte Chapter of the Tunisian Human Rights League (LTDH) on October 6 issued a communique protesting the forcible blocking by plain-clothes police of a meeting the previous day between U.S. Embassy officials and members of the Bizerte LTDH branch (reftel). An informal English translation of the statement, which was released in Arabic and disseminated on tunisnews.net, follows.

¶2. Begin Text of LTDH - Bizerte Communique:
Tunisian Human Rights League -- Bizerte chapter
Bizerte, October 6, 2006
Communique

The steering committee of the Tunisian Human Rights League Bizerte chapter announces that on Thursday, October 5, 2006, the security forces banned the committees meeting with three American diplomats, led by the Political Affairs Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Tunis, who had requested a meeting with the committee during a visit to Bizerte.

Upon the arrival of the diplomatic car, security forces in plain clothes arrived in great numbers and prevented the committee members and the diplomats from entering the Leagues headquarters.

The Bizerte chapters committee informs Tunisian public opinion of the above incident and would like to stress the following points:

-- The committee rejects the repressive methods of banning the meetings and the activities of the chapter in Bizerte and of all the other Leagues chapters.

-- The absence of any legal justification for such aggressive methods confirmed the repressive policy adopted by the Government against the League. A policy in obvious violation of the law and the constitution particularly since the banning decision occurs, every time, verbally and the security forces never present a written document to justify their action legally.

-- The committee remains convinced of the legality of the present Leagues national steering committee and of our right, as members of the League, to hold our 6th congress away from the Governments efforts to impose submission and containment on our organization.

-- The committee reiterates its determination to carry on its activities as stipulated by the Leagues internal regulations and international human rights conventions. The committee will continue to defend human rights and uncover the constant violations in this field that the Tunisian authorities are trying to hide by imposing repression against the League and all other independent human rights organizations in Tunisia.

For the committee, Ali Be Salem, President.

End Text.

BALLARD

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